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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re U.S. Patent Application)
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Applicant: Leonard Ekkert)
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Serial No.: 10/077,367)
)
Filed: February 15, 2002)
)
For: **APPARATUS AND METHOD**)
ALLOWING GAS FLOW INTO)
AND/OR OUT OF CONTAINER)
ASSEMBLIES)
)

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

This is a Preliminary Amendment for entry in the above-identified application.

IN THE BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please delete the Fig. 4a description.

Please amend description of Fig. 6 as follows:

Fig. 6 is a detailed view of roughness values and textures that can be used in Fig. 4

REMARKS

With respect to the enclosed Notice to File Missing Parts, applicant hereby encloses a copy of the acknowledgement postcard received from the United States Patent and Trademark Office indicating receipt of the executed Declaration and Power of Attorney. In order to expedite matters, Applicant encloses the original executed Declaration and Power of Attorney. Applicant considers this requirement met. Applicant has also amended the specification to delete reference to Fig. 4a. No new matter has been added in this amendment. Also, new drawings with the margins corrected are enclosed.

Dated: April 18, 2002

Respectfully submitted,

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to a method and apparatus allowing for gas flow into and/or out of a container assembly. The container assembly comprises a container having a sealing surface, and a cap having a sealing surface. The sealing surfaces of the container or the cap or both given a texture that is polished or made coarser, as desired. In this way the sealing surface of the container and the cap cooperate with one another to form a seal and to allow gas to flow into or out of the container assembly.

In one embodiment, the container includes a base and a neck and the cap includes a protrusion. In such an embodiment, at least a portion of the neck is the sealing surface of the container, and at least a portion of the protrusion is the sealing surface of the cap.

The sealing surfaces cooperate with one another, and temporarily deform a shape of the cap, the neck and/or both. The cooperation also forms a seal between the cap and the container, and in one embodiment, an extent of the deformation can be limited by contact between stopping surfaces, blocking tighter engagement of the cap with the container.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side perspective view of the cap and container assembly with the cap secured to the container;

FIG. 2 is a top perspective view of the cap and container assembly;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3-3 depicted in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged view of the identified portion in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a similar view as illustrated in FIG. 4, but of an alternate embodiment; and,

FIG. 6 is a detailed view of roughness values and textures that can be used in FIG. 4.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to a method and apparatus allowing for gas flow into and/or out of a container assembly. The container assembly comprises a container having a sealing surface, and a cap having a sealing surface. The sealing surface of the container, the cap and/or both is (are) roughened. Further, the sealing surface of the container and the cap cooperate with one another to form a seal and to allow gas to flow into or out of the container assembly.

In one embodiment, the container includes a base and a neck and the cap includes a protrusion. In such an embodiment, at least a portion of the neck is the sealing surface of the container, and at least a portion of the protrusion is the sealing surface of the cap.

The sealing surfaces cooperate with one another, and temporarily deform a shape of the cap, the neck and/or both. The cooperation also forms a seal between the cap and the container, and an extent of the deformation can be limited by contact between stopping surfaces, blocking tighter engagement of the cap with the container.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side perspective view of the cap and container assembly with the cap secured to the container;

FIG. 2 is a top perspective view of the cap and container assembly;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3-3 depicted in FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged view of the identified portion in FIG. 3;

~~FIG. 4a is an enlarged view of the identified portion in FIG. 4;~~

FIG. 5 is a similar view as illustrated in FIG. 4, but of an alternate embodiment; and,

FIG. 6 is a detailed view of roughness values and textures that can be used in FIG. 4a.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to a method and apparatus for controlling gas flow into or out of a container assembly that is comprised of a cap 20 and a container 10. The container 10 and the cap 20 each have a sealing surface, and the sealing surfaces cooperate with one another. The sealing surface of the cap 20, the sealing surface of the container 10, or both, are roughened to allow for gas to flow into and/or out of the container assembly.

FIGS. 1 through 4 show a first embodiment of a container assembly embodying aspects of the invention. The first embodiment comprises a container 10 and a cap 20 designed for mating engagement with each other and to allow for gas flow into and/or out of the container assembly. The container 10 and cap 20 are ideally manufactured as molded plastic parts, preferably composed of polypropylene, polyethylene, or similar materials.

The first embodiment in FIG. 3 shows the container 10 including a base 11 and a neck 12. The neck 12 is the portion of the container 10 to which the cap 20 is engaged, and the end of the neck 12 defines a mouth of the container. The cap 20 includes a curved top 21 and a skirt 22 depending peripherally from the top 21. A portion of the exterior surface of the neck 12 is threaded, a portion of the interior surface of the skirt 22 is threaded, and the cap 20 can be secured to the container 10 by mating engagement of those two threaded-portions.

Also shown in FIG. 3, is a number of stops or projections 23 on the interior surface of the skirt 22 that are designed to contact a shoulder 13 on the exterior surface of the neck 12 at some time as the cap 20 is secured to the container 10. Those projections 23 and shoulder 13 act as stopping surfaces to block any tighter engagement of the cap 20 and the container 10 and to